

REMARKS

Claims 27, 28, 30, 32, 33, 35, 37, and 39 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, the specification is amended, claims 27, 30, 32, and 35 are amended, and claims 29, 31, 34, 36, 38, and 40–63 are canceled. Support for the amendments to the claims may be found in the specification, drawings, and claims as originally filed. No new matter is added.

Objections

The Office Action objects to the disclosure as having a number of informalities. The specification is amended correcting the informalities. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection are respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C §102

A. Inada

The Office Action rejects claims 27, 28, 30, 32, 33, 35, and 37 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,361,418 to Inada ("Inada"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Without conceding the propriety of the rejections, claims 27, 30, 32, and 35 are amended to more clearly recite various novel features of the claimed invention, with particular attention to the Examiner's comments. Specifically, each of claims 27, 30, 32, and 35 has been amended to clarify that the load supporting points of either the upper or lower turn tables are "*configured to receive and distribute applied force*" to the turn table. These load supporting points are disposed along a pitch circle having a diameter equal to a diameter of a pitch circle defined by the centers of wafer holding holes of a carrier plate. Inada does not expressly or inherently describe such features, and therefore cannot be said to anticipate these claims.

Inada does not anticipate independent claims 27 and 32. Claims 28, 30, 33, 35, and 37 variously depend from claims 27 and 32 and, thus, also are not anticipated by Inada. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

B. Fabry

The Office Action rejects claims 32, 37, and 39 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,416,393 to Fabry et al. ("Fabry"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

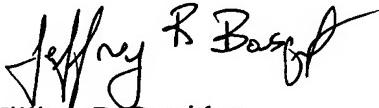
As discussed above, claim 32 has been amended to clarify that the load supporting points of the upper turn table are "*configured to receive and distribute applied force*" to the turn table. These load supporting points are disposed along a pitch circle having a diameter equal to a diameter of a pitch circle defined by the centers of wafer holding holes of a carrier plate. Fabry does not expressly or inherently describe such features, and therefore cannot be said to anticipate these claims. Claims 37 and 39 depend from claim 32 and, thus, also are not anticipated by Fabry. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 27, 28, 30, 32, 33, 35, 37, and 39 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,


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WPB:JRB/hs

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